

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell District Access Road Maintenance Project Design Year 2017

PP&A No.: 3834

Project Manager: Micah Bandurraga

Location: Flathead County, Montana.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):

B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to repair approximately 1.7 miles of access roads within the Kalispell District. Access road work would include the reconstruction of 599 LF of roadway and the improvement of 8,582 LF of existing roadway. Proposed road work would include: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on existing road prisms to ensure safe access to structures. In addition, the proposed road work would include: repair of four landings; repair of two turnarounds; and installation of drainage features such as a ford, eight water bars, and two drain dips.

BPA has easements for the roads. The underlying landowners crossed include the US Forest Service and private ownership.

Table 1. Access Road Work Locations

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership	USGS Quad Name
Hungry Horse – Columbia Falls No. 1 Line				
1/1 – 2/2	30N, 19W, Sections 21, 22, 27 & 28	Flathead County, MT	USFS	Dorris Mountain
Hungry Horse – Conkelley No. 1 Line				
6/1	30N, 19W, Sections 1 & 12	Flathead County, MT	USFS	Hungry Horse

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

(3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 15, 2018

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

The proposed access road maintenance is located within steep, mountainous terrain and includes the two following habitat types: Montane Forest and Forested Scree.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA conducted cultural resource field surveys for the proposed project. No cultural resources were identified within the Areas of Potential Effect. BPA sent Letters of Determination that no historic properties would be affected by the project to the Montana SHPO, and to Confederated Salish & Kootenai and Blackfeet on January 26, 2018 with no corresponding response received.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Material and equipment staging areas would be located on existing roads, structure landings, and turnarounds. Equipment would be restricted to existing road prisms, road fills, and structure landings. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special-status plants present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Grizzly bears and Canada lynx are not known to be present within the project area per a phone conversation with USFWS Wildlife Biologist Ben Conner on August 24, 2017; therefore, these proposed activities would have no effect on any federal/state special-status species or their habitats.		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: There is no proposed road maintenance involving a perennial water body or any designated bull trout habitat.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no mapped wetlands present within the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. Project would not result in any groundwater withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No change in land use would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality as a result of the proposed road maintenance.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty will make the necessary landowner notifications.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 15, 2018